

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY WARSAW

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PL, UR

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL

SEPTEMBER 27 NEW YORK TIMES CARRIED EDITORIAL ENTITLED

"ANOTHER WARSAW RETREAT". TEXT FOLLOWS:

"THE POLISH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THE OTHER DAY THAT IT IS ABANDONING ALL PLANS TO INCREASE BASIC FOOD PRICES UNTIL AT LEAST MID-1978. THIS IS THE LATEST AND IN SOME WAYS IMPRESSIVE RETREAT OF THE WARSAW REGIME BEFORE THE ANGER OF POLISH WORKERS SO VIOLENTLY EXPRESSED LAST JUNE DURING THE SHORT-LIVED EFFORT TO RAISE FOOD PRICES.

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE RETREAT IS ILLUSTRATED IN THE CASE OF MEAT PRICES. ON JUNE 25 IT WAS ANNOUNCED THEY WERE TO BE INCREASED 69 PERCENT, AN ORDER RESCINDED WITHIN HOURS AFTER THE RIOTS HAD BEGUN. A FEW WEEKS AGO A "COMPROMISE" SOLUTION WAS ANNOUNCED: MEAT AND POULTRY PRICES WOULD

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INCREASE "ONLY" 35 PERCENT. NOW EVEN THAT STEP HAS BEEN

ABANDONED AND BASIC FOOD PRICES ARE TO REMAIN THE SAME FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS.

SUCH A DRASTIC RESCISSION IS EXPLICABLE ONLY IN TERMS OF

FEAR THAT ANY EFFORT TO RAISE FOOD PRICES WOULD GENERATE SUCH VIOLENT RESISTANCE THAT POLAND WOULD BE PLUNGED INTO CIVIL WAR. THAT WOULD INEVITABLY MEAN THE DIRECT INTERVENTION OF THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SOVIET TROOPS IN POLAND, WITH THE END RESULT THAT WARSAW WOULD BE RULED--AS PRAGUE IS NOW-- BY A CLIQUE RESTING ONLY ON SOVIET BAYONETS. EVEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND -- SUFFERING FROM DISCRIMINATION AND DISABILITIES AS IT IS -- FEARS SUCH INTERNAL STRIFE AND HAS THROWN ITS WEIGHT ON THE SIDE OF STABILITY. IT IS SUPPORTING THE GIEREK REGIME AS THE LESSER EVIL FOR THE MOMENT.

IT IS NOW ALMOST 30 YEARS SINCE COMMUNIST RULE WAS FASTENED ON POLAND BY THE SOVIET ARMY AGAINST THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY OF THE POLISH PEOPLE. AN ENTIRE GENERATION HAS COME TO MATURITY SINCE THEN, BUT THE COMMUNISTS ARE FINDING POLAND AS INDIGESTIBLE NOW AS EARLIER CONQUERORS FOUND IT TO BE DURING THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES.

THE FINAL IRONY IS THAT PROBABLY MOSCOW IS PICKING UP THE CHECK FOR THE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IT MUST BE COSTING TO MAINTAIN POLAND'S PRESENT UNECONOMICALLY LOW PRICES, WHICH IN NO WAY REFLECT EITHER THE SUPPLY-DEMAND SITUATION IN POLAND OR THE INFLATION OF THE 1970'S."

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